

Glimpse into movement; every bit counts!

During the evening of Tuesday April 16th, Mum and I went to a two hour seminar held at the Hilton Hotel by Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat. The topic of the talk was the concept of using movement to be healthy.

The main message of the evening was perhaps an obvious one, but very overlooked due to our society's current mindset; move. Push, pull, bend, lift, take the stairs, park further away, stand when answering the phone, move, move, move. We have had it drilled into us over the past few years that if we do a session of exercise most days, we will be fit, a healthy weight and live longer, despite sitting at a computer all day, and carrying out tasks in the most convenient, time and energy efficient way. However, the research that is now coming out is that people who do this do not beat the health benefits (hip and waist measurements, lifespan, fitness) gained by the people who just keep moving throughout the day. It does not have to be much; just incidental movement, as much as possible throughout the day.

✖ It struck me that this is not only more beneficial to us and potentially more conveniently attained, it is also easier for people with chronic health issues to warrant as feasible. On days when the bed or the couch is moulding to the shape of your body, stretching your arms and legs, or turning your pelvic floor muscles on with a gentle clench, is much less confronting than the idea of going for a walk for an hour! I know that I have definitely fallen into the trap of thinking that because I have such poor exercise tolerance and can't do my beloved gym or swimming sessions, that I have to give up on the notion of having any type of fitness or strength, and can sit on the couch and eat cookies, almost guilt free. However

this idea that incidental movement every 20 mins or so is more beneficial than a big session once a day, means I am motivated, and am not let off so lightly!

Obviously, some health issues still make this difficult. On days when I am severely fatigued and dizzy, it would be dangerous to not ask for someone else to fill up my water. But on days you can safely do it, use the incidental things that need to be done as a form of exercise. No one else can go to the bathroom for you, so when you walk there, go the long way! Maybe that means walking around your couch twice on the way out of the lounge room! While you wait for the kettle to boil, clasp your hands together and stretch your arms out in front of you, stretching out your arms and back.



For people who are healthy and going about their day, keep in mind this concept of incidental movement. **If you move every 20 minutes, it does more good for you than an hour at the gym.** So, if you're parked at a desk all day, come up with ways that fit your job routine so that you are able to move every 20 minutes. Put the printer further away so that you are forced to walk to it. Physically visit your colleagues down the hall rather than emailing them about work issues. Take the stairs instead of the lift (Do you work on floor 28? Don't make excuses!...walk down to floor 27 and take the lift from there, and then next week go to floor 26, and then floor 25...).



A move that the speakers really encouraged was the Asian squat. Sitting in chairs is so bad for us and it is a move that humans are not designed to do. Way back in the beginning, we did not have chairs. Our body design has changed so minutely over those thousands of years, that we should not be doing things too differently from what our first ancestors did. However, our lives are massively different. Bringing one thing back to our day's routine, the Asian squat, could help us to realign our bodies to where they should be. We were

advised to do this move for one minute in two sessions a day, but if you can get up to ten minutes, all the better.

Take a look at this great video that I found that has fun with the Asian Squat! <http://youtu.be/gWTmg4dHiKg>

One speaker said that he eats his breakfast cereal this way each day. There are a lot of daily activities that could be done in this position; cleaning your teeth, watching the tv, drinking your cup of tea, the list goes on! It may take time to build up to being able to keep your heels on the floor, but as you loosen your tight muscles, your legs, hips, back, core and pelvic muscles will all become so much happier. It also massages your insides, so your gut is happier too, and your blood circulation is improved. Studies have shown that communities that practise this move as part of their daily routine, live a lot longer than those that do not.



Sure, she might not look too happy, but for all we know, she is 152, and is babysitting her 83 descendents!!

Do not give up on your one hour session at the gym; that is still a great thing for your body. Just make sure that you do not fall into the misguided thinking that you can be stationary all day, be active for an hour, and be slim and healthy! And if you have a low exercise tolerance due to health issues, be motivated by the notion that every little movement has been proven to greatly improve your level of fitness, maintain a healthy weight, improve your mood, blood flow and so much more!



Just so you know....While I have been sitting here writing this blog post, I have been bouncing my legs under the table, walking to the tap to refill my water (and taking the long way back to my seat), pausing to do Asian squats, stretching my arms and clenching my stomach muscles!